

**Thomas Jefferson to Henry Tazewell, January 16, 1797,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
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Ford.**

TO HENRY TAZEWELL J. MSS.

Monticello, Jan 16, 1797.

Dear Sir, —As far as the public papers are to be credited, I may suppose that the choice of Vice-president has fallen on me. On this hypothesis I trouble you, and only pray, if it be wrong, that you will consider this letter as not written. I believe it belongs to the Senate to notify the V P of his election. I recollect to have heard, that on the first election of President & Vice President, gentlemen of considerable office were sent to notify the parties chosen. But this was the inauguration of our new government, & ought not to be drawn into example. At the 2d election, both gentlemen were on the spot and needed no messengers. On the present occasion, the President will be on the spot, so that what is now to be done respects myself alone; and considering that the season of notification will always present one difficulty, that the distance in the present case adds a second, not inconsiderable, and may in future happen to be sometimes much more considerable, I hope the Senate will adopt that method of notification, which will always be least troublesome and most certain. The channel of the post is certainly the least troublesome, is the most rapid, &, considering also that it may be sent by duplicates & triplicates, is unquestionably the most certain. Inclosed to the postmaster at Charlottesville, with an order to send it by express, no hazard can endanger the notification. Apprehending, that should there be a difference of opinion on this subject in the Senate, my ideas of self-respect might be supposed by some to require something more formal & inconvenient, I beg leave to avail myself of your

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friendship to declare, if a different proposition should make it necessary, that I consider the channel of the post-office as the most eligible in every respect, & that it is to me the most desirable; which I take the liberty of expressing, not with a view of encroaching on the respect due to that discretion which the Senate have a right to exercise on the occasion, but to render them the more free in the exercise of it, by taking off whatsoever weight the supposition of a contrary desire in me might have in the mind of any member.